

THE ♫ NONCONFORMIST ♫

♪ MUSICAL ♫ JOURNAL

A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF WORSHIP MUSIC IN THE NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES.

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A MONTHLY RECORD AND REVIEW.

Devoted to the interests of Worship Music in the Nonconformist Churches.

EDITED BY E. MINSHALL,

*Organist and Director of the Music at the City Temple,
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Music and the Masses.

WHATEVER we may have been in the past, we are gradually becoming a musical people. Fifty years ago the knowledge of music was a luxury enjoyed by only a few of the middle classes. To-day, the poorest child attending the Board Schools is instructed to sing by note. It seems probable, therefore, that in another ten years, not to know at least the rudiments of music, will be the exception rather than the rule.

The lower classes have the reputation of appreciating nothing but the vulgar music-hall style of song—no doubt to many of them that is the perfection of vocal art; but the taste of the masses is certainly improving. Only a month ago, no less than five thousand persons attended a performance of "The Golden Legend" at the Great Assembly Hall, Mile End Road. That surely is an indication that even at the East End of London the love for good music is growing. A short time since at a concert for the lower classes, one of Haydn's trios was performed, and from our own observation we can testify that it was thoroughly enjoyed. These are encouraging signs for the future, and we hope that the influence of the divine art will refine and elevate those coming under its power.

Much is being done musically for poor people. The Kyrle Society does a most useful work in

performing oratorios in various parts of London. Concerts are given at the Victoria Hall, New Cut, which are attended by persons of the roughest kind. Free concerts have been given at the City Temple every Thursday evening from October to May since 1881, and it is estimated that considerably more than half a million of persons have thus been entertained and instructed. Saturday evening concerts have likewise been given in connection with Dr. Allon's church for some years. At Dr. Clifford's church, at Westbourne Park, similar concerts are held with great success. Many other chapels, where periodical concerts are given, are likewise helping in the good work.

Some persons have the notion that anything will do for poor people, so a programme is made up of third-rate amateur talent. This is a great mistake, for they know perfectly well "what's what," and can quickly detect an indifferent vocalist or instrumentalist. No quantity of "fine feathers" will palm off an incorrect or unsympathetic singer; but, however plainly she may be attired, a lady who pleases the audience by her artistic singing is sure to receive a hearty round of applause.

Those who direct and control our Church Music should remember that the lower classes, as well as the more educated people, like good music. Especially in the modern "Services for the People," and "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," the congregations should not be overdoled with Moody and Sankey. A few of their pieces may be acceptable and useful, but something of a higher standard should certainly be also included in the programme. This would be appreciated, and the promoters of these excellent services would then be aiding in the spread of musical education, as well as carrying on their own special Christian work.

WE are glad to hear that the necessary preliminaries for the practical work of the Choral Conductors' Alliance are being proceeded with. At a meeting of the executive, held early in February, the Tests for the certificates were discussed, and are to be settled at a second meeting. In a short time conductors, choirmasters, and others will be in possession of full particulars respecting the aims of the Alliance.

As a specimen of the good the Nonconformist Choir Union is doing in the country, we give the following extract from a letter received from an organist in the Midlands:—"When I commenced here last year I only knew one choirmaster in the town. Now we have representatives from eight of the local choirs in our Union and have kept up our practice every week since the Festival. We pay 5s. per week for our room, and only charged 1s. per quarter subscription: yet we finished the year with a balance in hand. Of course members pay for their own music. As we are almost certain to clear a few pounds by our concert, we have agreed to charge only 1s. subscription from January 1st, 1890, to June 30th, 1890. We have already helped one local choir to give a concert of a much better class than they would have been able to do

without the assistance of our Union. I mention these matters to show you that the Union is doing good elsewhere than in London."

MACBETH is not the only person who has exclaimed—

"Amen
Stuck in my throat;"

for we learn that at the United Methodist Chapel, Worksop, where a new hymnal has just been introduced, the choir sang the "Amen" at the end of the hymns. This was more than some could tolerate, and a prominent member gave notice at the end of the service, that a resolution would be brought forward at the next meeting of the elders, respecting the innovation which the choir had inflicted upon them that day!

THE Book of Music for the Crystal Palace Festival on June 7th is now ready, and may be had —by choirs intending to take part—from Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, E.C.

THE Anthems sent in for the Three Guinea Prize Competition are now in the hands of the adjudicator. We shall next month announce the name of the successful competitor.

THE Musical Editor of *The Staffordshire Knot* has suggested that the Nonconformist choirs of Hanley and district should form themselves into a Union. The objects of such a Union, he states, should be to improve the musical part of the worship of the Free Churches, and to strengthen the position of organists, choirmasters, and choirs in regard to their places in the organization of Church work. Some of the means for attaining such objects he well puts as follows:—

1. Monthly meetings of organists, choirmasters, and others for the reading of papers and discussion of the many practical questions that bear upon their work.
2. The occasional visitation of choirs for the purpose of mutual help and encouragement.
3. The delivery of lectures on the musical part of worship or demonstrations for congregations and choirs with the view to promote congregational singing. Such meetings, with a distinctly practical aim, might be held by the union of several churches in a town.
4. The promotion of graded competitions among the choirs. Such competitions are held in some parts of London and in various other districts with great success and much benefit to the various organisations.
5. An annual meeting of the choirs, which should approximate to that held in Exeter Hall in connection with the Tonic Sol-fa College.

Such an organization as that sketched above would be of the greatest possible value to the choirs and the churches of which they are a not insignificant part. We sincerely hope the choirs of Hanley will take up the matter with spirit.

Reminiscences of an Organist.

(Continued.)

SOME years ago a minister in a remote part of Wales wrote requesting me to visit the works of a certain organ builder, to examine a second-hand organ that was

for sale. Particulars of the instrument (which had been advertised in glowing colours) were enclosed, and the price asked was £200. I saw at once there was something not quite straightforward. I, however, went to the address given, and, without mentioning my name, said I had come to see the organ about which a gentleman in Wales had written. The owner at once launched out into eloquent language concerning the advantages, beauties, and cheapness of the instrument, and spoke of it as an unusual bargain. "I suppose you have come from Wales to see it?" said he. "No," I replied, "there is my card." The man's face was a sight to behold! Shame was written all over it. A variety of excuses were offered. The organ would perhaps not quite suit the people, so it was not worth while my spending any time in looking at it. It was not in good playing order; in fact, anything to prevent my seeing it. I was, however, determined to see it, and I was, therefore, ushered into a room where the organ was. Needless to say it was not satisfactory, to put it mildly. In my opinion it was dear at £50. The next move was to try and get the Welsh people to employ him to build a new one—would I use my influence on his behalf? "Once bitten, twice shy," said I to myself, and having said "Good day" to the builder in a rather significant manner, I went home and wrote my report of this "great bargain." Moral: Beware of second-hand organs. *

For another church I was once engaged to go and see what was stated to be a "new organ," but which had, somehow or other, found its way to a "depository,"—in reality a pawnshop. I forgot the price asked, but I know it was very much more than its real value. It was in very bad condition, and the quality of the work was of the worst description; in fact, it was made up almost entirely of old materials. The deacons, however, had almost made up their minds to purchase it, so glibly had it been described to them. They opened their inexperienced eyes when I explained matters to them. On my advice they had an organ, of equal size, built for the chapel by a good firm, the cost of which was less than what they were about to pay for the one at the pawnbroker's! *

Only one more instance of second-hand organs. A large and influential church in a suburb of London, was in want of a good organ. Some one had told an official of the church of an instrument which had quite recently cost £1,200, but could now be purchased for £600, or probably less than that. I was consulted, and I was instructed to go and see the organ and report upon it. Proceeding to the address given me in one of the busiest parts of the West Central district, I found the organ in a shed, surrounded by lumber of every description, and exposed to the wind and the rain. It was really a painful sight. Here was a three-manual organ well built, and, so far as I could judge, of fine quality of tone when first put together: but probably owing to pecuniary difficulties of the man who built it, it had been brought to its present position. How long it had been there I do not know. But when I examined it, it was in a state of decay, and I am afraid it would

take a large sum to put it into anything like good condition—if it could be done at all.

A small organ-builder who had a two-manual organ of some sixteen stops erected in his shop, just ready to be despatched to its permanent destination, sent out printed invitations to organists to go and try this instrument. Passing near his place on the day named in the invitation, I turned in and found the proprietor doing what little playing he could, for the benefit of the rector to whose church the organ was going. I was a stranger to both parties. The builder showed off the several stops, and pointed out that in every instance his work was far superior to any other firm's. His reeds were far beyond Messrs. ——'s, and his flue-work than Messrs. ——'s. He then began to inform the country parson that there were many "duffing" organs built, even by firms who had a great reputation. "For instance," said he, "there is the organ at ——" (naming the church where I play): "it is really only fit for firewood!" I had been silent so far, but now it was time for me to speak. I therefore handed him my card. He found he had opened his mouth and put his foot into it. I told him pretty plainly what I thought about him, and I invited the listening rector to come the next day and hear my organ, when he would be convinced that, instead of being only fit for firewood, it was very much superior to anything this trumpeter builder ever did or ever could turn out. The rector enjoyed the little affair immensely, though evidently he was somewhat anxious as to the quality of his new instrument. The builder made some kind of excuse, and begged me to try his organ. I need hardly say, however, that after what had passed I declined to touch his instrument. I am afraid ere this the rector has found that the organ was not all that its builder represented it to be. Moral: Beware of small builders of no reputation.

The authorities of a certain church wanted an organ, but one condition was that it was to be built in three months. A specification was sent to several firms. A. would build it for £1,200; B. for £900, and C. for £600. B. was selected, but he was honest enough to tell the people that though he could build the organ in three months it would be an impossibility if a really good instrument was to be turned out. The three months clause, however, was a most important one in the minds of the deacons, so C. was commissioned to carry out the work. He started at once, but did not complete the organ till nine months after!

(To be continued.)

Suggestions to Singers.

1. LEARN tunes and words so thoroughly that you can sing them accurately and independently without notes, words, or instruments.
2. Practise singing without instruments, or with only *stringed* instruments to guide the voice; and do not depend upon organs or keyed instruments when learning tunes.
3. Do not think that half an hour's slipshod discordant

singing, by persons who sing neither with the spirit nor the understanding, constitutes a "praise service."

4. Remember that one old hymn and tune sung properly is worth a dozen new songs and tunes sung carelessly.

5. In learning a new piece, *read* the words over in concert, plainly, before singing them; mastering the sense, and pronouncing every word distinctly.

6. Do not sing so fast that the words will be lost in a babel of confused and senseless sounds, and do not expect a large congregation to sing a light tripping tune as rapidly as it can be sung by a quartette choir.

7. Sing with the mouth well open, but *never show the teeth*, nor allow the voice to split and divide over them, producing harsh and grating sounds.

8. Do not condemn tunes till you can sing them, or till you have heard some one else sing them as they should be sung; and do not imagine that you can sing *any tune* correctly till you can understand, and sympathize with, and *love*, the words you are singing.

9. Do not expect ungodly, profane, and wordly people to sing the Lord's songs acceptably, or to relish spiritual praise; and if those who profess godliness have lost the spirit of song out of their hearts, do not imagine that those who have never named the name of Christ will be successful in singing the high praises of God, whatever price may be paid them for such service.

10. Ask godly, devout, mature, intelligent, and spiritual Christian people how the singing can be improved, and carefully consider their suggestions; remembering that that wisdom is not confined to young people.

11. Do not undertake to sing the book through in an evening, but study the book patiently, learn its hymns, and sing them with the spirit and with the understanding also.

12. Let the leader of the singing go through the hymnal used in the desk, and plainly mark with an x or some other mark, all the tunes which can ordinarily be sung without difficulty. Let two such marks be used to designate tunes which are entirely familiar, and can be sung at *any time* without hesitation. Similar marks can be used in the index to indicate familiar tunes or favourite hymns. Thus hymns may be announced at any moment without the liability and embarrassment of failure, and one of the hindrances to good singing avoided.

The Five Powers of Sacred Music.

THE Rev. J. C. CARRICK of Newbottle, preaching at a service of praise in St. Giles's, Edinburgh, pointed out five great powers of sacred music. 1. Its expulsive power over the soul. 2. The educative power. The ancient Roman kings made their laws in verse to be easily learnt, and the blessings of the Gospel had been spread far more by hymns than by sermons. 3. The softening power. The man the sermon did not affect might be melted by the hymn. If they looked through Scripture they would notice how the notes of sacred music had always accompanied great spiritual changes. 4. The memory-recalling power. 5. The elevating power—there being something in the songs of Zion which after being sung left them better and nobler men. The singers should remember that their part in the divine functions was as important as the voice of fire from the pulpit.



Music at Robertson Street Chapel, Hastings.

HASTINGS is within such an easy distance of the Metropolis that it is much frequented by Londoners, especially by those who for various reasons can only spend a few days at the seaside. It may be considered, therefore, as one of our most popular seaside resorts. For the same reason the musical service at Robertson Street Chapel may be taken as a very fair specimen of the services at most of the many flourishing health resorts to which people flock in the summer months.

We have never visited this chapel without seeing a good congregation, but in summer it is invariably crowded. Upon this occasion, in spite of a storm of wind and rain almost every seat was occupied.

The Rev. Charles New is the esteemed minister of the Church, and judging from the size of the congregation, he is as popular as he ever was. Simple but devout in style, people understand and appreciate his sermons; and as a hard worker amongst his regular congregation he has won the affection of them all.

A few years ago the old chapel was pulled down; and in its place a handsome and very comfortable building has been erected, at a cost of about £11,000. The pulpit is placed at one end of the chapel, and immediately behind it is the organ, which was built by Messrs. Forster & Andrews of Hull. Unfortunately it is placed in a very deep recess, consequently the tone does not travel well into the body of the church. The choir sit on the ground floor on the right and left of the pulpit.

There are seats for about twenty, but on the occasion of our visit the choir consisted of eight ladies and seven gentlemen. For such a building, a choir of double the number is required, especially as the congregation join heartily in the singing. There surely ought not to be any difficulty in such a flourishing church in enlarging the choir. And if we may venture to say it, we think a few of the present members might make way for some more efficient singers. Why do the choir not sit in the organ gallery? That is a far better position for leading and controlling the singing than at the foot of the pulpit. We strongly advise this change as likely to be very helpful to the music.

The organ is very tastefully played by Mr. Herbert S. Prentice, whose likeness we give above. The voluntaries were both appropriate and expressively rendered. The accompaniments were, if anything, too weak. Such hearty congregational singing needs good support, but several times the organ was quite overpowered. This was probably in consequence of the instrument being placed in the recess to which we have already referred. It would be well for Mr. Prentice sometimes to get a friend to play while he listens from the gallery facing the pulpit. This would enable him to judge how much organ is required to sufficiently support the voice.

The "Congregational Hymn Book" is used here, with the "Bristol Tune Book" and Dr. Allon's chant book. The first hymn was Ray Palmer's "Come, Holy Ghost, in love" which was sung to *Moscow*, but the dotted semibreves at the end of the first and second lines were not held out long enough. The singing was very general, but chiefly in unison.

After the First Lesson and a prayer, Psalm ciii. was chanted to *Mornington* in E \flat , changing to *Weldon* in G minor at the seventh verse. The first named was not sung as arranged in the "Congregational Psalmist," the second line being made to end in the dominant key. The chanting is to be commended; it was very steady, the time good, and recitation passages clear. The choir appeared to be at home in this exercise, as if they had spent some time in preparing it.

After a Second Lesson Montgomery's hymn, "In the hour of trial," was sung to Dykes's melodious tune, *St. Mary Magdalene*. Mr. Prentice showed much artistic ability in his accompaniment to this tune, his light and shade being exceedingly good. Had the congregation been equally attentive to the sentiments they were singing, the effect would have been better.

The closing hymn, "O Thou, the contrite sinner's Friend!" was sung to a fine tune not familiar to us. It was admirably adapted to the hymn, and probably was written specially for it. The congregation knew it well, and sang with the heart as well as the lip. This was by far the best item in the musical service so far as the congregation were concerned.

We were greatly disappointed and surprised there was no anthem in the service. Why not? Surely in a church of this size there ought to be no difficulty in singing an anthem at each service.

At present there are four prayers—two of them decidedly “long” ones. Could not an anthem be substituted for one of these? The introduction of an anthem would probably be pleasing to the congregation and would make the service more complete.

As a working church, Robertson Street has few equals. We should like to hear the music up to a similar standard. Mr. Prentice has only recently taken up the work here, but if the musical arrangements are entrusted entirely to him, we have no doubt he will ere long improve the worship music, and make it worthy of the congregation and the well-known reputation of the church.

Northampton Nonconformist Choir Union Festival.

THE Northampton Nonconformist Choir Union gave their second Choral Festival in College Street Chapel, on Tuesday, the 18th ult., and it was of a successful and very encouraging character. Close upon four hundred voices, representing twenty-four local Nonconformist choirs, took part. The chapel was crowded in every part. The following ministers were present, in addition to the Rev. W. Tidd Matson, each taking part in the service:—Rev. T. Gasquoine, B.A., Rev. J. J. Cooper, Rev. F. W. Pollard, Rev. H. Matson, Rev. J. C. Roberts, Rev. F. T. Smythe, Rev. B. W. Bremner, Rev. T. F. Robinson, and Rev. J. C. Street. When due allowance is made for the few opportunities the choir had, prior to Tuesday, for united practice, they are to be generally congratulated on their musical achievement. The whole was pervaded with a thorough earnestness, and it is very evident that the object of the Union, which is the development and improvement of music in the Nonconformist chapels, is likely to be achieved by the holding of such festivals. The choir was conducted by Mr. E. Minshall, whilst Mr. R. W. Strickland presided at the organ. The festival opened with Watts's hymn, “Praise ye the Lord, immortal choirs,” sung to that grand old tune *Emmanuel*, which was given with considerable spirit. Psalm cxlvii. was chanted to music by S. Wesley, and after the First Lesson the “Magnificat” was sung to a setting by E. Bunnett, Mus. Doc. This went with considerable vigour, the unison passages telling out well. The expression was also good. Conder's hymn, “The Lord is King! lift up thy voice,” was sung to *Niagara*, a bold and effective tune. The anthem was “God hath appointed a day” (Tours), a somewhat difficult anthem for a “scratch” choir—many of the singers not being accustomed to sing anthems at all. Taking this into consideration it was creditably rendered, especially the last movement. The quartette was sung by Miss March, Miss Chester, Mr. Saedker, and Mr. Tomlin. Unfortunately the prevailing epidemic had attacked three of the singers originally selected to take the solo parts, and the substitutes were called upon, almost at the last minute. The Rev. W. Tidd Matson's well-known hymn, “God is in His Temple,” was sung to *Gröningen*, and was followed by a most interesting address on “Hymnody,” by the same gentlemen (a portion of which we subjoin—the remainder to be given next month). After the collection, “Our day of praise is done” was sung; and after the Benediction Mr. Minshall's setting of “Brightly gleams our banner” followed, which was very heartily rendered. We regret that influenza prevented many of the singers from attending. The energetic secretary, Mr. E. J. Biggs, being amongst the number, the arrangements were ably carried out by the treasurer, Mr. Rogers.

Hymnody.

BY THE REV. W. TIDD MATSON.

ALL strong emotions of the human breast seem naturally to find their outcome in song. The love of man and woman, domestic affection, friendship, patriotism, ardour of battle, bacchanalian mirth even—have each stirred the poetic impulse and inspired their votaries to embody in tuneful speech those “thoughts which breathe and words that burn.” What wonder, then, if that which is of all emotions the deepest, the sacred feeling which religion prompts, which uplifts the human soul into a higher atmosphere and brings her into communion with the Infinite, should have ever sought its appropriate expression in poetic numbers, and given birth in all ages to “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”!

I am to speak to you to-night on the subject of “Hymnody,” as a theme suited to this festive gathering of your united choirs. The field chosen is a wide one, and within the brief limits of the time allowed me I can do little more than with a somewhat hurried step traverse its outskirts, gazing with wistful eye on the exceeding wealth of fruitage which it yields, and with tired and trembling hands that yearn to pluck, but may not, of the samples that delight my view; and happy if by anything so desultory I may induce you to employ your leisure in the same tuneful regions, where all is redolent with the hues and traceries of a Divine beauty, and where every bower and avenue rings out those golden minstrelsy, which serve as the prelude on earth to the high harpings of the skies.

The word “Hymn” (*Ὕμνος*), as you are aware, is Greek, and was the name given by the poets of Hellas to those songs, alike of an epic and lyric cast, which they composed in honour of the gods and heroes of that renowned land. Of these there have come down to us the hymns attributed to Homer (though it is exceedingly doubtful whether the Father of the Epic Muse had any hand in their composition); those, too, which they ascribed to the Orphic lyre; the electric and spirit-stirring odes of Pindar; and those graceful and elegant effusions which adorn the pages of Callimachus. Not to these, however, do we trace the prototype of the Christian hymn, with its devotional spirit, sublime adoration, grateful thanksgiving, lyric rapture, and exalted aspiration after communion with God. Rather are they occupied with describing the somewhat questionable adventures of their fabled deities; and in the whole compass of the classical Greek poetic literature I know of nothing embodying that spiritual feeling which we associate with our idea of worship, if we except the fine hymn of the Stoic Cleanthes in praise of Zeus, which has been made familiar to the English reader in Professor Newman's admirable translation.

The true prototype of the Christian hymn is to be found in the Hebrew Psalter, in those songs of glowing adoration which the shepherd-minstrel flung abroad on the night air beneath the starry heaven, as he watched his father's flock on the hills of Ephratah; or those deep

* An Address delivered at the Northampton Nonconformist Choir Union Festival.

devotional utterances of faith in God with which he cheered his soul as in later life he wandered lone, an exile in the wilderness of En-gedi; or those sublime aspirations which, out of the depths of tribulation, arose to Heaven from the perplexed spirit of holy Asaph; or those lyric bursts with which the returning exiles from Babylon hailed their restoration to the joys of liberty. In these songs, embracing a wide period of Jewish history, but all-inspired by the thought of Jehovah as the One God and of His special care and Providence over the Hebrew people, we behold the fruitful source whence has flowed down to us through the ages the ceaseless tide of sacred song, and which in the sweeping range wherewith they touch upon every varying shade and hue of the deep experiences of the human soul, transfiguring them into tuneful expression, however they may have influenced the devotional singers of succeeding times, have rarely been equalled and have never been surpassed.

The long line of the Hebrew Psalmists seems to have been brought to an abrupt close very shortly after the return of the Jews from Babylon. We know, indeed, that it was about this time that the light of prophetic inspiration was withdrawn, and that Malachi, the last of those wondrous seers, set the seal to the Old Testament revelation with his prediction of the near advent of the Messiah, as the Sun of Righteousness rising on the world with healing in His wings. Together with this withdrawal of prophecy, we mark a quenching of the old poetic spirit by which this interesting people had been through all the ages so marvellously distinguished, nor can I call to mind in the whole history of literature another instance of so sudden an extinguishment of a nation's poetic fire. At any rate, if any poets of power and genius arose among them their writings have not come down to us. The Psalter, however, with its inexhaustible stores of minstrel wealth, was still handed down from generation to generation among the people at large—its songs of high devotion and living beauty stamped in upon their memories, and dwelling on their tongues, in their temple-worship, in their synagogue meetings, in their stated pilgrimages to Jerusalem, in their social gatherings, and on the occasion of all those special events which occurred to them in their national family and individual life.

Hence, when the Saviour came, bringing in the new dispensation of the Gospel, He appeared among a people whose whole mind and thought were steeped in the spirit of the ancient Hebrew psalmody; and it is interesting to note that among the signs and circumstances by which His advent was attended was a brief revival of the old psalmic and poetic fire, and that in quarters where we might least of all have expected to find it. From an aged priest in the Temple arose the noble "Benedictus;" from a young peasant maiden the splendid "Magnificat;" while from a hoary-headed devotee, as he clasped the Infant Messiah in his arms, sprang forth the grateful strain which has become endeared to the Christian Church in the "Nunc Dimittis." How deeply the Saviour's own mind was influenced by the spirit of the national psalmody is evidenced by the frequent quotations from it which adorn His teaching; while not a little of which teaching itself partakes of a highly poetical character, and is

marked by that peculiar parallelism which constitutes the distinguishing feature of the Hebrew poetry. Certain it is that, when in company with His disciples, their social intercourse was diversified by the exercise of devotional singing; and when, on the occasion of His last simple meal with them, before He went forth to the dread scenes of His Passion and Crucifixion, at the close, the guest-chamber rang with the sound of their voices blending together in the strains of a solemn psalm, supposed to have been the 118th Psalm, which forms the concluding portion of the Hallel—it was "when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Accustomed as the disciples thus were to the exercise of devotional singing, they would naturally employ it as one of the helps to their spiritual life, after the great baptism of the Spirit had fallen upon them. That such was, indeed, the case, may seem sufficiently evident from the conduct of Paul and Silas on that memorable night which found them in the dungeon at Philippi, when, to inspirit their minds and encourage their hearts in the midst of the unmerited suffering which had overtaken them, we are told that "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God: and the prisoners heard them." Indeed there can be little doubt that sacred song formed no inconsiderable element in the worship employed by the early Christians. The Apostle Paul, exhorting believers, bids them to speak to each other "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Similarly, James writes to Christians when in cheerful mood to sing praise. While in that famous letter which Pliny wrote from Bithynia to his imperial master, seeking for instructions as to how he was to deal with the Christians, he, among other things, describes them as those who sang hymns to Jesus Christ as to a God.

But while thus the worship of sacred song established itself in the Primitive Church, perpetuated from those ancient Jewish customs, to the observance of which the earliest teachers and preachers of Christianity had been trained, the old Hebrew psalmody, out of which it had grown, would be found insufficient to express and embody the new thoughts, ideas, aspirations, hopes—in a word, the new life which Christianity had awakened. This would seek its outcome in song appropriate to itself, and would thus inspire the poetically gifted among them to tune forth in new and original forms those feelings and sympathies, those hopes and joys, which pervaded their little churches and communities. It is here, I believe, that we are to mark the beginnings of that Divine flood of Christian hymnody which has rolled down to us through the long centuries with a great sound, as of many waters, commingling in their flow and anthemizing the grand burden of one mighty Hosanna in praise of God and His redeeming love.

How fervently we could have wished that some of those early hymns of the Primitive Church had survived to us in their entirety, but they have become lost in the night of ages. I doubt not that we are presented with certain fragments from them quoted in Paul's Epistles; notably in Ephesians v. 14—

"Awake thou that sleepest,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ shall shine upon thee."

Again, in 1 Timothy iii. 16—

"Great is the mystery of godliness:
He who was manifest in the flesh,
Justified in the spirit,
Seen of angels,
Preached unto the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up into glory."

And yet again, in 2 Timothy ii. 11-13—

"If we be dead with Him,
We shall also live with Him :
If we suffer,
We shall also reign with Him :
If we deny Him,
He also will deny us ;
If we believe not,
Yet He abideth faithful :
He cannot deny Himself."

For not only are these sentences, in the original, rhythmical in their structure, and modelled to a great extent after the fashion of the old Hebrew parallelism, but they also possess the novel element of rhyme, a feature which was altogether unknown to the Hebrew poetry.

The earliest Christian hymn which has come down to us in its entirety is the extended form of the "Gloria in Excelsis," and of which an English translation is contained in the Communion Service of the Anglican Church. The next in order of time is a beautiful hymn addressed to Christ by Clement of Alexandria, about the close of the second century, and of which the Rev. Allan Chatfield has rendered a very fair metrical translation. These two noble productions head the long series of ancient hymns, which we owe to Syrian, Greek, and Latin sources, and which we find culminating in mediaeval times in the "Dies Irae" of Thomas of Celano, and the "Stabat Mater" of Jacobus de Benedictis. I wish I had time to follow the windings of this tuneful river of sacred song, and even to give a few specimens of the work of the chief singers, but this the strict limits imposed on me imperatively forbid. It is gratifying to know that several fine translations of some of the best, notably the "Dies Irae," the Jerusalem hymns of Bernard of Clugny, the hymns to Jesus of Bernard of Clairvaux, the "Alleluia" of Godescalcus, the "Art thou weary?" of Stephen of Saba, and the Evening Hymn of Anatolius—have found a place in our more recent hymnals, and are frequently employed in ministering to the improved song-worship of our Protestant Nonconformist congregations. Those of you who may wish for a fuller acquaintance with these inestimable treasures of ancient hymnody, I may refer to the translations from Ephraem Syrus of the Rev. Henry Burgess, the songs and hymns of Greek Christian poets by the Rev. A. Chatfield, and the valuable translations from Greek and Mediaeval sources which have been given to the Church of Christ by the late Dr. Mason Neale.

(To be continued.)

Nonconformist Church Organs.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE CHAPEL.

Built recently by Mr. Vowles of Bristol.

Great Organ.

		Feet.
1. Double Diapason	.	16
2. Open Diapason	.	8
3. Gamba	.	8
4. Clarabella	.	8
5. Principal	.	4
6. Harmonic Flute	.	4
7. Twelfth	.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
8. Fifteenth	.	2
9. Posaune	.	8

Three Combination Pedals.

Swell Organ.

10. Double Diapason	.	16
11. Open Diapason	.	8
12. Viola	.	8
13. Stopped Diapason	.	8
14. Dulciana	.	8
15. Vox Angelica	.	8
16. Principal	.	4
17. Lieblich Flute	.	4
18. Twelfth	.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
19. Fifteenth	.	2
20. Mixture	.	3 ranks.
21. Contra Fagotta	.	16
22. Cornopean	.	8
23. Vox Humana	.	8
24. Oboe	.	8
25. Clarion	.	4
26. Tremolo	.	—

Four Combination Pedals.

Choir Organ.

27. Viol d'Amour	.	8
28. Dulciana	.	8
29. Lieblich Gedact	.	8
30. Suabe Flute	.	4
31. Piccolo	.	2
32. Clarionet	.	8

Pedal Organ.

33. Open Diapason	.	16
34. Bourdon	.	16
35. Violone	.	16
36. Bass Flute	.	8
37. Violoncello	.	8

Couplers.

38. Great to Pedals.		41. Swell to Great.
39. Swell to Pedals.		42. Choir to Swell.
40. Choir to Pedals.		43. Great to Choir.

The Organ is blown by Hydraulic Power.

Children's Voices.

FEW parents or guardians of young children realize the danger of allowing them to sing in public, especially under the care of irresponsible or ignorant instructors. To say nothing of the mental and moral injury such exhibitions are apt to produce in fostering vanity and love of display; nor of the physical evils attendant upon the consequent excitement, late hours, etc.; the effects on the voice itself and on the child's possible future as a singer are sufficiently deplorable to justify a note

of warning from the voice-trainer's point of view. If children were taught by those who understand the voice, and who could check or remedy the faults most apt to be committed, these ill effects could be reduced to a minimum or entirely prevented; but, unfortunately, those who train children at such times generally promote, or even occasion, faults which ruin the voice and not infrequently lay the foundation of future ill health.

A case in point is that of a young girl who, as a child, was noted for her remarkably beautiful voice, and was much sought after for exhibition purposes. From the power and range of her voice, as a child, a glowing future was predicted for her, and doubtless she would have realized the hopes of her friends had they been judicious enough to refuse her assistance on these occasions. Unfortunately she was allowed to strain her voice by singing in halls large enough to test the power of experienced artists with the result of its entire loss at the age of sixteen.

Some time ago a child of eight or ten was taken to a teacher for the purpose of having her voice tried, and of considering the question of instruction. The lady, learning that she had been allowed to sing in juvenile entertainments, refused to accept her as a pupil unless she would be withdrawn from all such public occasions, as the voice already showed that great injury had been done by the child attempting to fill large space with her tiny, birdlike voice. Her friends hesitated about what seemed to them so radical a step, and finally concluded not to engage the lessons. Not long since she took part in a public entertainment, singing several songs, but to an intelligent listener the voice was in a distressing condition. The tones were harsh and distorted from all semblance of beauty, and towards the end became so hoarse that the child could scarcely finish the song. The effort she made was positively painful, yet murmurs of "How sweet!" "How lovely!" were heard from the audience. Such sounds given by an adult would not have been tolerated, but the eye has such influence over the ear that the appearance of a child, picturesquely garbed, graceful and self-possessed, is enough to dominate all unpleasant impressions of sound in the minds of an average audience.

Here is where the evil should be attacked. Let the public understand what an injury is wrought to the child by these few moments of wonder at its immature gifts, and a check may yet be placed upon this slaughter of the innocents. It is as much of an impossibility for a child to produce full and sonorous tones as it would be to load it down with heavy weights and expect it to walk with ease. Many who would regard the latter as an act of cruelty will listen with complacency to a child straining every nerve to fill a large room with a voice that from its nature is not intended for such use.

This should not be understood as condemning all training of the child-voice; far from it. As said at first, it is only a protest against its abuse by ignorant and irresponsible teachers in forcing it to a work for which it is entirely unfitted. It is well known that Jenny Lind did not escape the penalty of a too early use of her voice in public, as she lost it when yet a child. She was more fortunate than most juvenile prodigies in regaining it after several years which she devoted to the earnest study of theory and the piano. These years of

study doubtless did much to form her the artist she afterwards became, but only her iron constitution and indomitable will enabled her to reach the height she attained in the face of another breakdown in early womanhood. In the opinion of some who are qualified to judge, she never did repair entirely the early strain upon her voice, and they attribute her premature retirement from the stage to a conviction that it could not withstand the wear and tear of operatic work. Even the voice of her successor in the public favour, Adelina Patti, when taken in charge by Max Strakosch to be trained for the operatic stage, was said to have been impaired by too much singing in public when a child, and only his infinite tact and care, aided by an entire withdrawal from the stage, enabled her to enter upon and pursue the career now so well known to all.

The normal child-voice is light and high, devoid of the deeper colouring and feeling of the adult voice; yet, notwithstanding this lack, possessing a peculiarly touching charm of its own in its soft, clear tones, unclouded by a knowledge of the pain and trouble of the life just at hand. As a general thing, their teachers do not appreciate this charm, but do their best to destroy it in their mad quest for power. How often do we hear them say: "Children, sing out! You are not singing at all! Louder! louder!" etc., with the result of a fresh series of hoarse and distorted tones from the already over-forced throats. I remember under such circumstances hearing an infant class sing, "We are Jesu's little lambs" in tones that reminded one of nothing so much as of little ravening wolves. Yet no one seemed to notice the contradiction between tone and word.

Even in choirs composed of boys, trained as they are by musicians, how often is the ear offended by the strident voices of the sopranos, and the blatant chest-tones of the altos! Experience shows that this is by no means necessary. One of the most successful trainers of boy-choirs says that he had no difficulty in securing the highest and most musical tones from his boys, because he never allowed them to scream. As they were naturally light in quality he was obliged to have a larger number than most choirmasters required, but the wisdom of his practice was certainly borne out by the effect produced, which was, in contrast to the majority of boy-choirs, a thoroughly musical one.

The instruction of children as regards the voice should be almost entirely negative; that is, they do not require teaching what to do so much as what not to do. They may be trusted to form their tones as they please, if they do not sing too loudly nor with any undue effort. If these conditions cannot be secured they should not be allowed to sing at all. Nothing is more painful than to hear a child struggle to fill a large room with a voice crippled from an attempt to wrest from nature what is not there. In no way can we find compensation for such an exhibition. The mind receives no pleasure, as there can be no intellectual grasp of the subject, while the ear is tortured by shrill and distorted sounds which awaken a natural anxiety for the child's future welfare. A healthy child possessed of a good ear is the most natural singer in the world, because the most unconscious. It is only when tampered with by those who should know better that disastrous results are to be feared.

Composing Against Time.

JOHANN STRAUSS has written a biography of his father, the great waltz composer, who, together with Lanner, created the modern Vienna dance music. The elder Strauss, who died in 1845, at the age of forty-five, was for some time a leader of one of Lanner's orchestras, which he left when he discovered his talent for composition. "In those days," says his son, "composition was easier than it is to-day. Now, in order to produce a polka, one has to study the entire musical literature, and perhaps, in addition, several philosophical systems; formerly, only one thing was required in composing: one had to have an idea. And, strange to say, the idea was always forthcoming. Self-confidence in this respect was so great that, in years gone by, we many a time announced for a certain evening several new waltzes, of which on the morning of that day not one single note had been written. In such cases, the orchestra came to the house of the composer, who, as soon as a portion of the waltz was written, gave it to the musicians, who copied and practised it. In the meanwhile, the composer managed to have a few more 'ideas'; in a few hours the piece was ready, it was rehearsed, and in the evening generally enthusiastically received by the public. Lanner, careless and light-minded as he was, scarcely ever composed differently. Thus it happened to him that one morning, when not a single note of the new waltzes announced for the evening was ready, he found himself too ill to write. He sent a messenger to my father with the simple request: 'Please see that you get an idea.' In the evening the new waltzes were performed—of course, as Lanner's compositions—and met with extraordinary success. This occurrence, together with my father's marriage in the same year, caused him to start an independent orchestra."

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

BLOOMSBURY.—An organ recital was given in Christ Church, Endell Street, W.C., on Monday evening, January 27th, in aid of the organ fund, by Mr. H. W. Dunkley, organist and choirmaster of Bethnal Green Road Congregational Church. The pieces were selected from the works of Bach, Rossini, Handel, Sullivan, Gounod, Mendelssohn, and Smart. The vocalists were Miss Eliza Hopkins and Miss Jessie Skinner.

BRONDESURY.—The new organ in St. George's Presbyterian Church, by Messrs. Henry Willis & Sons, was opened on Sunday, the 16th ult., by Mr. F. G. Edwards, who has also drawn up the specification of the instrument. The following is a synopsis of the organ:—Three manuals (CC to G), and a Pedale (CCC to F). *Great Organ*, five stops:—Open Diapason, Claribel Flute (8-ft.), Principal, Fifteenth, and Trumpet. *Swell Organ*, nine stops:—Lieblich (16-ft.), Open Diapason, Lieblich (8-ft.), Gamba, Vox Angelica, Principal, Mixture (3 ranks), Horn, and Oboe. *Choir Organ*, four stops:—Dulciana, Claribel Flute (8-ft.), Harmonic Flute (4-ft.), Coro di Bassetto. *Pedal Organ*, three stops:—Open Diapason, Bourdon, and Flute Bass (8-ft.), mechanically derived from Bourdon. *Couplers*:—Swell to Great, Swell to Choir, Choir to

Pedals, Swell to Pedals, Great to Pedals. Two Composition Pedals acting on Great and Pedal Organ, and three acting on Swell. Great to Pedal by foot moyement. Compressed air action to the Pedal Organ, whereby the action is made perfectly noiseless and the touch very light. All the stops (except the Vox Angelica), go throughout the compass. The organ is well placed on the ground floor, and has a double front: one facing down the church the other facing across the chancel. The Choir Organ and some of the other stops are "prepared for" only at present.

HIGHBURY.—A most enjoyable entertainment was given in Highbury Quadrant Hall, on the 18th ult., by the choir-boys and their friends, under the able direction of Mr. A. T. George. So great was the popularity of the programme, that this was the third time of its performance. The songs, recitations, and pieces by the band were much appreciated, also Romberg's "Toy Symphony." The most attractive item, however, was "Robin Hood," which was acted in a most intelligent manner. Great credit is due to all the young performers, and to Mr. George, for the great trouble he must have taken in preparing them.

LAMBETH.—Gaul's "Holy City," was performed at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, on Wednesday, January 29th. The solo vocalists were: Misses Edith Luke, Marion Palmer, Louise Lancaster, and Ella Thompson; Messrs. G. W. R. Hoare and Walter Jones. The choir of the church, assisted by friends, sang the choruses. Miss Lancaster's rendering of "Eye hath not seen," and Miss Luke's solo, "These are they which came out of great tribulation," were greatly appreciated. The accompaniments were excellently played by Mr. Frank N. Abernethy, F.C.O. (organ), and Mr. J. P. Attwater, A.C.O. (grand piano). Mr. J. R. Griffiths conducted.

LEYTONSTONE.—On Tuesday evening, the 4th ult., the choir members of the Cann Hall Road Baptist Church united in presenting Mr. Witney with a *baton* of pure ivory, with silver-gilt mountings richly engraved. Mr. Witney has toiled laboriously; and, not without difficulties and disappointments, has conducted evening classes and weekly rehearsals, that the musical part of the services on the Sunday might be as bright and as perfect as possible. His work is marked by good taste and patient effort; and in making the presentation Mr. Bowman did well to say that his usefulness must not be measured by this special recognition of gratitude and respect. The pastor, Mr. Ennals, spoke on behalf of the deacons and himself in expressing their gladness that the members of the choir had found it in their hearts to do such a good thing. Mr. Ennals thanked the choir for their continued help in the ministry, and in referring to their leader said that they all appreciated Mr. Witney, for while no one could be perfect, Mr. Witney had only just sufficient imperfection to enable him to work in harmony with the choir and congregation. Mr. Witney's reply showed how highly he appreciated the gift as a memento of their confidence and sympathy.—A special musical service was given by the choir of the Cann Hall Road Baptist Church on Thursday, the 6th ult., when Guest's cantata, "The Captive Maid of Israel," was performed. The Gospel story of salvation is beautifully worked out in the narrative of Naaman, who is directed by the little captive maid to the prophet, and so healed of his leprosy. The piece was enjoyed by a very large audience, the chapel being completely filled. The admission was free, by ticket; and the pastor, Mr. Ennals, made an appeal for the choir expenses, and announced that on Good Friday the choir, with full band and chorus, would perform Shinn's delightful oratorio, entitled, "The Captives of Babylon." The choir numbered about thirty-five voices, and the chorus

singing, without being strained, was clear and sweet, and went with considerable evenness and effect. The principals were Miss Amey and Miss Carter (sopranos); Mrs. Willsdon (contralto); Mr. Matthews (tenor); Mr. Bowman (bass). The success of the vocal music was aided by the performance of an efficient orchestra composed of:—1st violins, Messrs. H. Garvin (leader), Odell, J. Bates and Roffey, Misses Eva Davies and Kitty Drysdale; 2nd violins, Masters Sawle and Guest, Miss Amey, Mr. Hammond; 'cello, Mr. Mundy; flute, Mr. A. Bates; contra bass, Mr. E. Dudley; piccolo, Master Wheeler; clarinet, Mr. A. Bates; cornets, Messrs. Pilgrome and Pickles; pianoforte, Mr. Thomas King (church organist); conductor, Mr. F. G. Witney. All the business arrangements were carried out by the choir secretary, Mr. Bowman.

PECKHAM.—The Clifton Choral Society, in connection with Clifton Congregational Church, gave a performance of Cowen's cantata, "The Rose Maiden," and a selection in the lecture hall adjoining the church on Thursday, January 30th. The soloists were Miss Rose Moss, Miss Fenn, Mr. Sinclair Dunn, and Mr. W. G. Hazelgrove—all of whom discharged their duties in a thoroughly satisfactory manner; while the choir sang with their usual care and precision, the popular "Wedding Chorus" being enthusiastically demanded. Mr. Thomas S. Wyard conducted, Mrs. Frank L. Taylor presided at the piano, and Mr. F. W. A. Drake officiated at the harmonium. There was a large and appreciative audience, and the proceeds are to be devoted to the Special Church Fund, in connection with the Surrey Congregational Union.—On Saturday, the 8th ult., at the ordinary choir rehearsal, the members had prepared a surprise for the conductor, it being the anniversary of his birthday. The pastor (the Rev. H. J. Perkins) was present, and spoke of his appreciation of the work of the choir, and of the splendid harmony that had existed during the three years of Mr. Wyard's connection with it; and on behalf of the members he had great pleasure in handing him a splendid silver-mounted ivory baton, as a slight token of their esteem—wishing him, not only the usual "many happy returns," but that he might be long spared to wield it in their midst. Mr. Wyard replied in a few well-chosen remarks, and concluded by asking the choir to rise and sing under the new baton, as an expression of praise and thanksgiving for past favours, and as their watchword for the future, "Hallelujah" from the "Messiah." [The choir and choral society are preparing for their third annual performance of the "Messiah," with full band and chorus, and are also rehearsing for the Nonconformist Union Festival at the Crystal Palace in June next.] The following acrostic was handed to Mr. Wyard, by one of the members:—

"MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY."

T hat you and yours may long enjoy
H ealth, wealth, and peace, without alloy,
O r unforeseen anxiety—
M y friend, I wish it—yes, indeed;
A nd also that you long may lead
S oably this Society,
S urrounded by the friends, who here
W ith kindly hearts unite to cheer
Y our birthday anniversary.
A dieu, my friend, you will I know
R eceive from me this blessing, though
D one in a manner cursory.—J. L.

REGENT'S PARK.—On Wednesday, the 5th ult., a most enjoyable concert of chamber music was given in Regent's Park Chapel Schoolroom, by Mr. J. H. Phillips, assisted by Mr. H. R. Starr (violin) and Mr. Clement Hann ('cello). A glance at the programme will show

how judicious was the selection. The performance was eminently satisfactory, Mr. Phillips's pianoforte playing giving the utmost satisfaction. The programme included the following:—First movement, trio, Op. 42 (Gade), by desire; Sonata for pianoforte, Op. 10, No. 1 (Beethoven); Trio in G major, Op. 14 (Mozart); Violoncello solos (*a*) "Romance" (*b*) "Arlequin" (Popper); Violin solo, Andante tranquillo and Allegro moderato from 7th Concerto (De Beriot); pianoforte solo, "La Cascade" (Pauer). Mr. H. L. Falkerson and Mr. F. H. Rose were the vocalists.

TOTTENHAM.—On Tuesday, January 28th, the High Cross Congregational Church Choir held their first quarterly soirée in the schoolroom, which was carpeted for the occasion, and draped so artistically that it was transformed into a large drawing-room. The choir, which has made marked progress since taken in hand by Mr. Fred S. Oram, numbers thirty-eight, instead of ten, as formerly; and the Church has done wisely in placing it in the hands of one who seems thoroughly to understand the work. There are from thirty to thirty-five members at both morning and evening services: they have nearly every Sunday either a solo, a special anthem, or quartette; and the congregation seem thoroughly to enjoy the sacred innovation that is now heard in the church; while Mr. Oram is to be congratulated upon the way all pieces are given. After a short time of friendly intercourse some business was brought before the members as to various improvements, etc., with free discussion, interspersed with music and singing, making the proceedings very enjoyable; after which the Rev. O. N. Tribe (minister of the church) made a few timely remarks, thanking the members for their united efforts in the cause of music in the sanctuary, saying how indebted he felt to them for the wonderful improvement in the singing. In conclusion he diverted his remarks to their much respected organist, Mr. A. J. Wilmott, and said by the wish of the choir he was asked to present him with a bound volume of Smart's "Org in Voluntaries," together with an illuminated address, signed by every member of the choir, as a mark of their appreciation of his services and their great esteem for him as a friend. Mr. Wilmott was quite taken by surprise, and said a few words in reply. After this little ceremony, refreshments were partaken of, the arrangements being carried out in an excellent manner by a small committee of ladies of the choir. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

PROVINCIAL.

ABERDEEN.—A lengthy and somewhat animated debate took place in Aberdeen Presbytery on a complaint from some members of Trinity Church, against the Session for adopting a resolution, which was only carried by the casting vote of the minister, Rev. A. Doak, in favour of the introduction of instrumental music. The complainers declared that the Act of Assembly of 1883 gives no authority to Kirk Sessions or congregations to introduce instrumental music, and also that there is nothing in the New Testament authorizing its use in public worship. A resolution dismissing the complaint and affirming the judgment of the Kirk Session was unanimously passed.

BISHOP AUCKLAND.—A very interesting service of song, entitled "Chips," was rendered in the United Methodist Free Church, on Sunday the 2nd ult., by the church choir. A collection was taken on behalf of the school funds.

BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER.—A concert was given in the Baptist schoolroom on Thursday, January 16th, when the room was well filled. The platform and surroundings were most tastefully decorated by

Mrs. Kendall, Mrs. Hobbs, Mrs. Muir Smith, and the Misses Kendall, to whom many thanks are due. The first part of the programme was a sacred cantata, "The Lion of Judah" (Dawre), which was rendered by a choir of nearly forty voices under the conductorship of Mr. W. N. Reynolds. The principal solos were well taken by Miss Lizzie More, soprano (Cheltenham); Miss Bunn, contralto; Mr. Geo. Payne, tenor; Mr. Frank Hartwell, bass. The orchestra was composed as follows:—Piano, Miss Heath; harp, Miss Phillips Combe (Cheltenham); 1st violin, Miss Edith Combe (Cheltenham); 2nd violin, Mr. G. L. Jordan; 1st cornet, Mr. H. Barton; 2nd cornet, Mr. J. W. J. Shilton; violoncello, Mr. J. Hartwell; organ, Mr. J. H. Wilkins. The rendering of the cantata reflected great credit upon the conductors and performers, who had devoted much time to its preparation. The second part opened with an instrumental quartette, "Come, Margarita, come" (Sullivan), which was played by Miss Heath, Miss Phillips Combe, Miss Edith Combe, and Mr. J. H. Wilkins, and gained hearty applause. Miss Lizzie More then sang "The Children's Home," and submitted to a well-merited encore by singing "Some Day." A brilliant violin solo, "Romance" (Beethoven), was then given by Miss Edith Combe, which showed to advantage the capabilities of the performer. Another song by Miss Lizzie More, "Oh, fair dove! oh, fond dove!" was much enjoyed, but an encore was declined. The last item, March in "Scipio" (Handel), was very creditably executed by the full orchestra. The concert was repeated on the following night (Friday), when the room was literally packed.

BURTON-ON-TRENT.—In connection with the Nonconformist Choir Union a concert was given on the 18th inst. in the Salem Lecture Hall, before a large and appreciative audience, when the following programme was admirably rendered: Anthem, "Praise the Lord," choir; solo, "O rest in the Lord!" Miss J. Adcock; chorus, "How lovely are the messengers!" choir; solo, "There is a green hill," Miss Miriam Morris; anthem, "A day in Thy courts," choir; recit. and air, "Deeper and deeper still;" "W&t her, Angels," Mr. J. C. Gorton; chorus, "And the glory of the Lord," choir; recit. and air, "Thus saith the Lord," "But who may abide?" Mr. J. Phillips; solo, "He shall feed His flock," Mrs. W. G. Hutchinson; part song, "The Pilgrims," choir; chorus, "Now tramp o'er moss and fell," choir; song, "Daddy," Miss Miriam Morris; song, "The Raft," Mr. J. Phillips; part song, "Oh, my love's like a red, red rose!" choir; song, "Alice, where art thou?" Mr. J. C. Gorton; part song, "The Children's Hour," choir; song, "When the children are asleep," Mrs. W. G. Hutchinson; song (new), "The Chief Mate's Story;" "The Wreck of the Indian Chief," Mr. J. Frost; song, "Tit for Tat," Miss Miriam Morris; glee, "The Sisters of the Sea," choir. In the absence of Miss E. J. Smith (through illness), Mendelssohn's solo, "O rest in the Lord!" received a faithful interpretation at the hands of Miss J. Adcock, and elicited hearty and well-merited applause. The anthems, choruses, and glee, by the choir, were given in first-class style, and were one and all equally deserving of the applause which they received. The singing of the National Anthem brought to a conclusion a concert which, both from financial and musical points of view, was a decided success. Miss M. L. Port (pianoforte) and Mr. Edwin Slater (organ) ably officiated as accompanists, while the accuracy with which the choir carried out their portion of the programme gave unmistakable evidence that Mr. John Frost (the hon. conductor) had spared neither time nor care upon their training. During the evening Mr. W. G. Hutchinson (secretary) announced that since the Festival, which was held in June last, at the Crystal Palace, the number of members in Burton had increased from forty to sixty-five, and that ten places of worship in the town

were now represented. He sincerely hoped that such a testimony to the progress and usefulness of the Union would be sufficient to induce others to join, and that by June 7th (the date fixed for the next Festival) they would be able to muster a hundred members.

DUNDEE.—Mr. R. C. Robertson, choirmaster in Russell Chapel, has been presented by his choir with a dressing case; he led lately in organizing and carrying through a successful sale of work to obtain funds to purchase an American organ and alter the choir seats.

FROME.—On Monday, January 27th, Mr. J. Grant gave an organ recital at Wesley Chapel. His programme included selections from the works of Schumann, Gounod, Hepworth, Handel, Pleyel, and Rink. His playing was thoroughly enjoyed, especially the storm piece by Hepworth. Miss Annie Lea was the vocalist, and gave in capital style, "Let the bright seraphim," and "With verdure clad." There was a large audience.

GLASGOW.—Mr. D. S. Salmond, of Pollokshields, delivered on the 11th ult. a lecture on "Handel: The Man and His Music," in the large hall of Buchanan Memorial church. The Rev. A. C. Fullarton presided over a large audience. Illustrations of Handel's vocal and instrumental music were given by the lecturer and by Miss Salmond, Miss Macnab, and Messrs. R. and G. J. Smith, Pollokshields.—In St. Stephen's Free Church, instrumental music was employed on Sunday, the 16th ult., for the first time. The change has been effected without the slightest apparent friction. In the meantime a large harmonium is doing service.—The large organ in Claremont United Presbyterian Church has recently undergone extensive repairs. It is a four-manual instrument by Forster & Andrews, Hull, and was the first organ introduced into a Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Owing, however, to the strong opposition aroused throughout the Church against instrumental music, the organ remained silent for many years. During the recent alteration Messrs. Melvin, of Glasgow, replaced the existing engine by two of their patent hydraulic blowers with pneumatic starter at keyboard.

GREENOCK.—A new organ has recently been put in West Free Church, and is blown by one of Messrs. Melvin's patent hydraulic c engines.

HANLEY.—Mr. William Docksey, organist and choirmaster of Tabernacle Church, has been presented by the choir with a timepiece in recognition of ten years' services.

HORNCastle.—A new organ is to be placed in the Baptist Chapel.

LOWESTOFT.—The Congregational Church has recently been renovated at considerable expense. The organ has been much improved by Messrs. Norman Brothers & Beard, of Norwich. It has also been removed from the west to the east end of the chapel.

MALTON.—A new organ has been erected in the Baptist Chapel.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—A fine new organ is about to be erected in Jesmond Presbyterian Church, and is to be blown by one of Melvin's patent hydraulic engines.

NORTHALLERTON.—On Wednesday, January 29th, a musical entertainment was given in the Town Hall, to a very large audience, by the members of the Shipton Bridge Wesleyan Choir, assisted by Mrs. Phillipson of Redcar, and Mr. Phillipson of Stockton-on-Tees. The first part of the programme was the service of song entitled, "Gems from the Life of John Ashworth," and the second part consisted of songs and choruses. It was a treat from first to last.

NOTTINGHAM.—An Organ Recital was given by Mr. W. Wright in the High Pavement Chapel, on January 29th. The following was the programme:—"Rakoczy

March," Slow movement and Finale from Symphony No 5 in C Minor (Beethoven); Allegretto Grazioso, Op. 62 (Mendelssohn); Introduction to 3rd Act and Bridal Music "Lohengrin" (Wagner); "Festival March" (by Mdesire) (Joseph Fletcher); Notturno and Wedding March from "Midsummer Night's Dream" (Mendelssohn).—The Quarterly Choir Festival at the same chapel took place on the 9th ult. Anthems by Handel, Schubert, Mendelssohn, were included. Solos were sung by Madame Fannie Lynn, and Miss Hugh.—On Tuesday, the 11th ult., the organ which has been placed in the Queen's Walk Congregational Church, was opened by Mr. William Wright, whose programme included selections from the works of Mendelssohn, Smart, Guilmant, Gounod, and Beethoven. The vocalists were Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Richardson, the former giving "Calvary" and "Nazareth," and the latter contributing Cowen's "Light in Darkness." Mr. Herbert Horner rendered three violin solos in excellent style, and Mr. George Middleton was the pianist, who, with Mr. Wright, contributed two duets for the organ and pianoforte, viz., "Pastorale" (Guilmant), and "Marche Solennelle" (Gounod), which were heartily appreciated. The organ has two manuals, and contains the seventeen stops and three couplers.

QUEENSBURY.—A musical service for the people, the first of the kind in the district, recently took place at Ambler Thorn Chapel.

SEDBERGH.—Mr. Frank S. Styler gave an organ recital in the Congregational Church on the 2nd ult. The programme was as follows:—Fantasia in C (Berthold Tours); Rondo, "Sœur Monique" (Conperni); Air varied, Symphony in D (Haydn); "Concerto in D minor and major" (Handel); Elevation (A. Guilmant); Barcarolle (4th Concerto) (W. S. Bennett); Allegro vivace (Morandi).

SHEFFIELD.—The organ at Nether Chapel, has been reopened after repairs with a recital by Mr. E. H. Lemaire, F.C.O., organist of the parish church.

TROON.—A new two-manual organ has recently been erected in the United Presbyterian Church here, by Messrs. J. & A. Mirlees, Glasgow. It is blown by Melvin's patent hydraulic engine with pneumatic starter at keyboard.

WELLINGBOROUGH.—A choir organ is to be added to the present instrument in the Congregational Church, at a cost of £150, the gift of Mr. C. J. K. Woolston, J.P., and the ladies' working meeting have voted £90 for three additional stops. From 8 to 9 on Sunday evenings musical services are given by a choir of sixty and a band of twenty instruments, with short address by the pastor, the Rev. T. Stephens.

WINGHAM.—On Thursday, January 23rd, the members of St. George's Place Canterbury Choral Society paid a visit to Wingham, and gave a sacred concert in the Congregational Church. The programme consisted of Stainer's Jubilee Cantata, "Praise and Thanksgiving." The solo parts were taken by members of the society, and the chorus consisted of twenty-five voices. Two sacred songs were contributed by Mr. C. Wilson, and one by Miss Alice Houlden. Mr. Deveries presided at the American organ, and Mr. H. J. Houlden conducted. During the interval the gas supply failed, and the second part of the performance took place under difficulties. The choir, however, acquitted themselves to the entire satisfaction of the audience. The chapel was completely filled. After the concert the Canterbury friends were entertained at supper by the committee which arranged for the entertainment, and votes of thanks were very heartily accorded to all who had assisted.

WORKSOP.—A new Hymnal was recently introduced in the United Methodist Church, and for the first time the "Amens" were sung. At the close of the service a leading member of the church rose, and said a resolution would be brought forward at the next meeting of the elders, with regard to the innovation the choir had inflicted upon them that morning.

Correspondence.

(We shall be glad to receive communications from any of our readers on questions likely to be of general interest.)

CUI BONO?

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—Knowing the interest that you take in the progress of music in our churches and chapels, I venture to relate something that has come under my personal observation within the last few weeks.

There is a chapel within the Metropolitan Postal District that is known to fame by reason alike of its celebrated preacher and the social status of the congregation. The chapel has the good fortune to be served by a really competent musician, who, as the story will unfold, deserves a better fate than that which he now enjoys (?) He is a man amongst the few whose enterprise is equal to his ability, and who would do really good work for his congregation if allowed and reasonably well supported.

I have been surprised before at the lack of interest taken by those to whom one would look for encouragement in such matters, but the last state is worse than the first.

Our musician arranged, at his own cost and risk, a really first-class concert, which was attended by about fifteen people, all of whom appeared to be personal friends. The programme was an excellent one, and rendered by professional artistes, but the loss on the evening, which fell upon the concert-giver, was greater than many an organist receives for a whole quarter's salary.

On inquiring the meaning of such a condition of affairs, I learned that "We did not like to ask that the concert should be announced on Sunday, because the deacons might think it *infra dig.*; but we did ask that it might be mentioned at the weeknight service—yet although two other concerts, given elsewhere, were announced ours was not; hence the scanty attendance."

I am often given to ask myself the question: "Do those responsible for the conduct of some of our churches and chapels want the aid of music and musicians or not?" If not, why do they tolerate it and them? Would it not be more consistent to say, "We object to both, and having the courage of our opinions we abolish singing and sell our instruments." If it is a fact that musicians are needful for the due rendering of praise, then let them be treated well and not merely "tolerated."—Yours truly,

Z.

MUSIC ON THE ATLANTIC.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR,—I have crossed the Atlantic several times, and have experienced the indescribable weariness with which the long hours drag day after day; and, even if one has not the misfortune to be affected by that Nemesis of the ocean, *mal de mer*, to any serious extent, there are times when one can do absolutely nothing which requires consecutive thought or employment of the intellectual faculties; and this is nothing less than a mild form of that malady—seasickness being largely an affection of the nerve centres;

and, although one may not be actually sick, yet, it sets the brain swimming in such a manner that to apply oneself to reading or writing would soon consummate that undesirable end.

One of the most pleasant features of a voyage I recently made from Southampton to New York, by a splendid North German Lloyd boat, was the band, an institution unknown, I believe, in the vessels of the English Transatlantic lines.

This band consists of eight or nine double-handed musicians, who, in their dual capacity of stewards and bandsmen (exceedingly nice fellows they are, too), have enough to do to keep them going.

They constitute a brass band, who play a welcoming *reveille*, including our own National Anthem, as the tender arrives alongside at Southampton; they also play selections every morning on the main deck. At dinner in the first saloon the band distributes itself into three violins, two cornets, a flute, clarionet, and contra basso, entertaining the passengers with a soft and soothing waltz, or a lively polka; and at 8.30 brings the day to a close by an hour's serenade in the second saloon.

The attainments of the instrumentalists are of no mean order, some of the pieces requiring quite feats of *technique* on the parts of the leader and flautist, notwithstanding the roll and pitch of the vessel. They are all seated at a table facing each other, except the contra basso, who, of course, stands to his work, and in rough weather he has to waltz round his instrument, and dance from side to side in order to keep "father fiddle" under control. This is sometimes absolutely funny, and of course gives great amusement.

As I have said, these performers are double-handed; the first violin exchanges for first cornet for open-air music, the second violins for second cornet and French horn, flute for tenor euphonium, and clarionet for trombone, but the contra basso gentleman—a clever performer—caps the lot. He is triple-handed, and alternates between the double bass, the bombardon, and the handle of the beer-pump.

Sunday was ushered in at 7 a.m. by the rendition of three German chorales, and ushered out at 9.30 by the Blue Danube waltz.

These half-hours of music, like Macniven and Cameron's Waverley pens, "come as a boon and a blessing to men," when crossing the Atlantic in the unseasonable month of January; they cheer without inebriating, and make a business journey less irksome and uninteresting than would otherwise be the case.

I am informed that each ship on this line of steamers is provided with a similar *corps de musique*, a fact which would have some little weight in deciding me in favour of the above route to or from the United States.

A. BERRIDGE.

"NEW TUNES."

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR.—I cordially agree with the general imports of your remarks on "New Tunes," in your last issue, together with the speeches of Messrs. Bannister, Turpin, and Curwen on the same theme, including their remarks on the conduct of the musical part of Divine worship in our Nonconformist Churches. Though very musical myself, I am free to say that I do not wish to enter a house of God where music is used to dominate the service. To me, the prayer of the minister offering us spiritual consolation and help, and the sermon—if the minister be an able and divinely taught man, unfolding to us the hidden mysteries and beauties of God's Word—are of the first importance. Yet I love the hymns sung by the congregation, more especially if the words are beautiful, and the music melodious; for they seem sometimes almost to lift our souls to the gates of Paradise. I occasionally go to a Congregational Church

in my locality, where they have a small, but excellent choir, and where the organist—a lady—selects with fine judgment tunes that are well known, but always appropriate and melodious. At the close of the service, the choir give us a short anthem; this seems to me an excellent arrangement. Now with reference to the number of tunes in use, I humbly think it far too large. Why should we have so many? We do not need them; it is a great tax on the memory of our individual worshippers, beside which a large number of tunes are sung destitute alike of tunefulness and musical symmetry. This greatly detracts from the hearty singing in many of our Churches.—Yours truly,

J. R.

"ORGANIST APPOINTMENTS."

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

SIR.—I now take up my parable with a brief reference to competitions where, no suitable or accredited organist being within reach, the congregation (through its officers) starts out in search of one.

An advertisement inserted in one or more of our religious or musical journals, stating pretty fully the nature of requirements, size of organ, salary, etc., will probably bring in a hundred applications. There must be a considerable amount of risk as well as labour in the sorting and selecting from several hundreds of testimonials those which are likely to lead to the right choice. So much depends upon the judgment of the writers, some of whom are probably but poor judges, and others anxious, for the most part, simply to do an old friend a good turn.

Three or four of the most promising candidates having been selected, further inquiries, bordering upon the inquisitorial, may be made with advantage. For example, one would wish to know as much as ought to be divulged as to past records, and to be informed a little as to the character and extent of the organ music possessed, with a rough list of the organist's favourite selections. The adage that "a man is known by the company he keeps" holds good, in a sense, here; and an organist aspiring to a good position ought to produce evidence of familiarity with music of various styles, and a preference for those works which rank highest on the opinion of good judges.

A clever cabinet-maker prides himself on his tool-chest, and the condition and variety of his weapons afford some little indication of the manner of man he is. So I would give some "points" in a competition for an organ appointment to the man who can show proofs of care, method, and even some self-sacrifice in his accumulated store of organ music.

I knew one candidate who had specially to buy a copy of Calkin's arrangements of airs from "Elijah," and another in the same competition who could produce a list of voluntaries to last for six months, containing no repeated numbers. I must confess to the uncharitable suspicion that a good many organists have but a poor "stock in trade," and that this may account for some unsatisfactory and otherwise unnecessary extemporizing.

To extemporize well is said to be almost a lost art. Some hold that it is a rare and special gift. Doubtless extempore playing is capable of, and well repays, culture and development; and it cannot be overlooked among the items which go to make up our ideal organist.

Stress must also be laid on *facility in transposing*. Some of our tunes are set too low, and more too high. The organist should re-write or transpose at sight such tunes as are found to be thus unsuited to the capacity of the majority of the worshippers. A considerate and humane organist will not overlook the fact that by a little trouble on his part he may make the singing of

hundreds of people more easy and enjoyable, while a wooden adherence to a bad score may make the psalmody, on the contrary, a weariness to the flesh.

Sympathetic accompanying must be made a *sine qua non*. Brilliant soloists for special occasions can generally be found when wanted; but accompanying with good taste, and sound judgment as to necessary force and most suitable combination of registers, should certainly have the pre-eminence over mere brilliancy of execution. It is most likely that the show pieces brought by your organist-candidate will be fairly well played; but by all means see that plenty of tests of capacity—in "giving out" tunes, and in accompanying hymns of varied character—are applied. Some organists seem to look little deeper than the words themselves for guidance as to expression; they thus often miss the real sense, and of course do not help the congregation to interpret and express the intention of the poet. Mere word-painting won't do. A reference in a hymn to thunder does not necessitate the putting on all the power possible in sub-octaves, with dissonating pedals held down, etc., etc., nor does the singing of birds always call for a series of shakes on notes in altissimo on a 2-ft. stop. I have often heard a clever organist overwhelm the singing in the line in Mudie's hymn—"How can I, Lord, withhold . . . or any power?" on the principle, I suppose, adopted by the choir-trainer who taught his singers to crescendo the line "And give for wild confusion" up to *ff*, dropping to *pp* on the word "peace," the effect being almost, if not quite, comical.

Now the question arises how best to arrive at a sound conclusion on these and kindred points—who shall be umpire? Everything seems to suggest the advisability of calling in the aid of an expert, one who knows—and whose judgment will be accepted as authoritative. He would make such arrangements as he might think best adapted to the special circumstances of the case, probably on the lines of the examinations at the College of Organists, in which the identity of the candidates is concealed from the examining professors. But, as I said before, the most carefully arranged competitions do not always turn out satisfactorily, and I cannot help harking back to the notion that the best results may be secured by nominating a gentleman of known character on the recommendation of a competent professional "guide, philosopher, and friend."

GAMBA.

Reviews.

The Nonconformist Historic Service of Song. By Libertas. (F. S. Sheldrick, 11, Bridge Street, Cambridge. Price 4d.)—This is a Service of Song written on new lines, and will be found very useful for giving young people information concerning the history of Nonconformity. Sixteen tunes are included, and as most of these are of the old-fashioned type (such as *Calcutta*), our elder friends will appreciate hearing them.

Te Deum. By Henry T. Tiltman. (Novello & Co. Price 2d.)—This may be termed a festival setting in simple form, chiefly consisting of chants. For special occasions it will be found useful.

A Golden Promise. Song by Henry T. Tiltman. (Weekes & Co. Price 4s.)—Contraltos will appreciate this song. It is very effective, the accompaniment being unusually appropriate. Parts are written for violin and organ.

Gavotte and Air de Ballet, for Piano. By Henry T. Tiltman. (Joseph Williams, 24, Berners Street, W. 3s. each.)—Two pretty and therefore "taking" pieces.

The Training of Men's Voices. A treatise on the right and the wrong method of voice production. By Mr. E. Davidson Palmer, Mus. Bac. (The London Music

Publishing Co., 54, Great Marlborough St., W. 6d.)—This little pamphlet refers especially to tenor voices. Mr. D. Palmer maintains that men's voices are as a rule wrongly produced, and here gives an outline of his method, which he says he has always found successful.

"*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.*" Anthem by Charles Darnton. (Curwen & Sons, 8 and 9, Warwick Lane, 6d.)—Mr. Darnton has the happy knack of writing very effectively without complicating his compositions with difficulties. This anthem contains great variety, for there are solos for soprano and tenor parts, and the full choruses are each different in style. It is, perhaps, a little long for ordinary church use, but for festival services or concerts it will be found very useful.

Responses to the Commandments. The Nicene Creed. Choral Service Manual. By W. T. Best. (Augener & Co., Newgate Street, E.C.) In those places where the Commandments are repeated and the Nicene Creed is used these arrangements will be very acceptable. The "Choral Service Manual" is carefully prepared and well printed.

To Correspondents.

A. L.—Yes.

J. T. S.—It was published in 1886.

B. M.—He was a clever musician, but no organist.

G. H.—"Organs, Organists, and Choirs" (Minshall) is published by Curwen & Son, Warwick Lane.

N. O.—(1) No. (2) Yes. (3) E flat.

F. A.—We shall announce the name of the winner next month.

Staccato Notes.

MR. VICTOR MUSTEL, the well-known harmonium maker, and the inventor of the Mustel Organ, is dead.

FIVE thousand people heard "The Golden Legend," at the Great Assembly Hall, Mile End Road, on the 1st ult.

"*St. Paul*" is to be performed on Handel Festival scale at the Crystal Palace on Saturday, June 21st. A Choir of 500 boys has been formed to sing in the chorales.

MR. AND MRS. PACHMANN are about to make a professional tour in America under the direction of Mr. Vert.

MR. W. T. BEST has gone to Australia to open the Great Organ at Sydney. He will make a six-months' tour in the colony.

JOACHIM is again in London, and received a warm welcome at the "Monday Pop. on the 17th ult.

BACH'S "*St. John's Passion*" will be sung every Friday in Lent at St. Anne's, Soho. Admission tickets may be had on writing to the Rector.

Accidentals.

A NEW song is entitled "The waves are washing the shore." It ought to be for soap-rano.

WHEN Queen Victoria knights any of the rich beer brewers, we suppose the band plays "Ale to the chief."

SHE (at the piano): Listen! how do you enjoy this refrain? HE: Very much. The more you refrain, the better I like it.

CONDUCTOR OPEN to ENGAGEMENT, Orchestral or Vocal, separate or combined, O.N. or Tonic Sol-fa. Good references. Terms moderate. Trial.—J. W. M., 36, Ockenden Road, N.